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REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in this application.

Claims 7-9, 11-14, 20 and 22 are objected to.

Claims 1-6, 8, 10, 15-19, 21 and 23-25 are rejected.

The office action dated September 14, 2005 indicates that base claim 1 would be allowable if the term "edge-bounded averaging" was limited to "the average value of connected pixels within a mask centered at (i,j)." Claim 1 has been amended to limit the edge-bounded averaging. Amended claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-17 should once again be allowed over the documents made of record.

Base claim 23 has been similarly amended. Claims 24-25 have been amended to depend properly from claim 23. Amended claim 23 and its dependent claims 24-25 should once again be allowed over the documents made of record.

Claim 4 has been amended to recite that the connected pixels within the mask are of the same type. This claim depends from claim 1.

Base claim 18 has been cancelled and replaced with new base claim 26. Claims 19 and 21 have been cancelled, claims 20 and 22 have been amended to depend from new claim 26, and claims 27-28 have been added. New claim 26 and its dependent claims 20, 22 and 27-28 are believed to be allowable over the documents made of record.

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Although the point is moot, Fan U.S. Patent No. 6,757,081 cannot be used in the '103 rejection of claims 8, 10 and 15-17. It is a 102(e) reference that is assigned to the assignee of the present application.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 USC §112, first paragraph, because the specification does not provide support for "starting from a first side of a line and proceeding to a second side of a line." This rejection is respectfully traversed because support is provided in the second sentence of paragraph 29 of the specification ("for every horizontal line, start at the left ... and proceed to the right").

The examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections. The examiner is encouraged to contact applicant's attorney Hugh Gortler to discuss any issues that might remain.